THE TVVO STEPS OF A Nonconformiſt Miniſter;

Made by him, in Order to the obtaining his liberty of Preaching in Publick.

Together with an APPENDIX about coming to Church in reſpect to the People.

Publiſhed for a *Teſtimony* in his *Generation*, by a Lover of *Sincerity* and *Peace*.

1 Tim. 5. 21.

Doing nothing by Partiality.

by L. Humphrey

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The First Step,

BEING

My Paper to the Bishop.

My Lord,

THE Design of this Paper is *Union* between the Moderate *Bishop*, and Sober *Nonconformist*; and there is but one Rule must be laid down in order thereunto, supposing *both* sensible that an endeavour after Concord as *Brethren* in the same *Reformed Religion*, is an undeniable Duty, and that a wilful neglect of it cannot be answered to God by either Party, whosoever of them shall be found in default. The Rule is this, that the *Nonconformist* be ready *to do* in the sincerity of his Conscience what *he can*, and that out of the like Conscience to God the Bishop then does bear with him in what he *cannot*, at least so far I hope as the *Law* and the *Government*, or his

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Duty *thereunto*, according to his own private Judgment of discretion, will give way.

The Nonconformist is to consider well the importance of such Texts as require *Subjection* to the *Higher Powers*, and he is out of Conscience to the *Fifth Commandment* to comply with their Injunctions to the uttermost that may give satisfaction, so far as he can without sin. The Bishop is to consider the import of such Texts as tell us what a dangerous thing it is to give occasion to the doubtful to do any thing against their Consciences; and he is out of Conscience to the *Sixth Commandment* (for fear of *destroying him for whom Christ died*) to take heed as he would of his life, to put a man upon any more than he is convinced he can safely do. When the *Nonconformist* now does *what he can*, the Law of God will bear him out in that which he *forbears*, and if he suffers, he hath peace in his Soul. If the *Bishop* likewise shall receive a man upon this account, as one that cannot require more of him, lest he *wound* his *weak Conscience*, and so *sins against Christ*, I doubt not but the Law of Charity and Mercy, that is, the Law which is *Gods*, will justifie him also as to whatsoever he falls short in the fulfilling the Law of *Man*.

It is true if the *Bishop* dispenseth, and the *Nonconformist* exceeds, the penalty may be sued, if there be

be any, and any body be ſo affected. It is Law (I ſuppoſe) *in Foro Civili*, and we muſt never *Reſiſt*: but it is no Law *in Foro Dei*, or *Conſcientiæ*, for the Authority of thoſe *greater* Laws of *Nature* and *Religion*, does ſuperſede the Execution, ſo that there is no guilt (as to God's ſight I mean) contracted in the omiſſion. God ſays, Thou ſhalt not do any thing which will deſtroy thy Brother, or wound his Conſcience. The Law ſays, Thou ſhalt put him to do thus, and not diſpenſe with him. Whom ſhall the good Biſhop chuſe to obey, the Law of his *God*, or the Statutes of the *Realm*?

Having therefore thus propoſed the Rule, I will proceed to Practice.

There are two things (My Lord) neceſſary for me by the *Act* for *Uniformity*, to obtain a liberty of the Pulpit. The *one* is I muſt read before the Biſhop the 39 *Articles* and aſſent to them, and you muſt give me a *Licenſe*; when I have got this, I may be ſent to Gaol if I ſubſcribe not the *Declaration* in the ſaid *Act*, and that is the 2d thing then I muſt do likewiſe. If I do this alſo, your Lordſhip muſt give me a *Certificate* and that with my *Licenſe* will ſerve, ſo that I count then no man *can* and no friend *will* put a bar to my Preaching, where I am peaceably deſired.

Indeed there is the Declaration of *Aſſent* and

conſent required farther of ſuch as have any preferment in the Church, but if I ſeek nothing but Liberty to Preach, this cannot be impoſed, becauſe I have no *Place* to make it in, according to the *Act*, and I muſt therefore in all points elſe be dealt with no otherwiſe than a *perfect Conformiſt*.

Now for my doing theſe two things (ſuppoſing *my ſelf* willing to do both ſo far as *I can*, and your Lordſhip willing to condeſcend to me in what *I cannot*,) I do apprehend that in reading the *Articles*, I may take leave as I go along to make my explication of any Article, and if my ſenſe be ſuch as is agreeable to your Lordſhips Judgment, or at leaſt what you judg fit to be allowed, you may paſs me as to the *Articles*; and if you will then afford me the like liberty of Explication in *Subſcribing* the *Declaration* alſo, I have no more to do but to ſet down my explications of the *one* and the *other*, and leave both to your Lordſhips *candour* and *conſcience* to *receive* me or *reject* me, as it ſhall pleaſe *God* and your *Lordſhip*.

I begin with the Articles.

The Thirty nine Articles of the Church I receive as Articles for *Concord*, (according to the Title) and not as Articles of *Faith*, and I ſuppoſe my ſelf therefore not tyed up to the *Authentick* ſenſe

ſenſe of the *Impoſer* (as I think we are in *Laws*) but to be allowed the liberty of a *Doctoral* Interpretation; That is, whereas in a Convocation every Doctor there (or Member thereof) is ſuppoſed or granted, in paſſing ſuch Articles or Canons to abound in his own ſenſe, ſo long as he can but reconcile the words to it. Let a man make any rational conſtruction of an Article which is agreeable either to the *preciſe words* (for that he may well think to be the mind of ſome or other of the *Doctors*,) or to the *ſenſe* which he believes to be the *meaning* of the *major part*, though varying from the words (for that, above any, when it can, is to be embrac'd) it is ſufficient (*I* count) in point of Conſcience, for his Aſſent to the ſame. Neither do *I* by an Aſſent to a thing according to my preſent Judgment, ſhut up my underſtanding from receiving and owning any *farther*, or *other* Truth, whereof *I* ſhall be convinced hereafter. This liberty being foreprized, *I* do declare my unfeigned *Aſſent* to the ſaid *Articles*, with theſe *Explications* or *Cautions*.

Art. 3. *I* aſſent to the *words*, they are *Scripture*, and my *Creed*, but I am uncertain of the meaning.

As Chriſt died for us, and was buried: ſo alſo is it to be believed, that he went down into Hell.

Art. 4.

Art. 4. That Christ arose and ascended with his proper *flesh and bones*, it is certain, yet whether upon his entring into the heavenly glory (as *Enoch* and *Elias*) this *flesh and bones* of his were not transformed into a *spiritual body*, *I* do question, seeing the Apostle tells us expresly, That *flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of Heaven.* We may refer this *flesh and bones* therefore to his *Rising* and *Ascension*, but leave it *in dubio* in regard to his *Sitting in Heaven.*

Christ did truly rise again from death, and took again his body, with flesh, bones, and all things appertaining to the perfection of mans Nature, wherewith he ascended into Heaven, and there sitteth, until he return to judge all men at the last day.

Art. 6. By [*Church*] I understand the whole *Catholick* Church, or this *Church of England*; for it is evident that there hath been doubt made of some Books in our Canon by Antient *Particular* Churches and *Fathers.*

In the name of the Holy Scripture, we do understand those Canonical Books of the Old and new Testament, of whose Authority was never any doubt in the Church.

Art. 8. The word [*thorowly*] I understand only in regard to the *Articles* of those *Creeds*, not in regard to the *Proem* and *Conclusion* of the *Athanasian Quicunque vult*, which is inconsistent

The Three Creeds, Nice *Creed,* Athanasius's *Creed, and that which is commonly called the Apostles Creed, ought thorowly to be received and believed: for they may be proved by most certain Warrants of Holy Scripture.*

ſtent *I* hold with the Goodneſs of God, and Natural Religion.

Art. 10. By the words [*no power*] and [*cannot*] I underſtand a *Moral* power and impotency, which lyes in ſuch a diſpoſition, as that a man never *will*, without the ſpecial grace of God: but not ſo, as if we had no power at all that is *Phyſical*; or as if the terms of the *Covenant of Grace* were *Impoſſible* to any.

The condition of man after the Fall of Adam, *is ſuch, that he cannot turn and prepare himſelf by his own natural ſtrength and good works to Faith, and calling upon God: Wherefore we have no power to do good works pleaſant and acceptable to God, without the Grace of God by Chriſt preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us when we have that good will.*

Art. 11. By the words [*Faith only*] I underſtand what *Paul* means by [*Faith without works*] that is, Faith in oppoſition to works, that would make the reward to be of *debt*, and not of *grace*, or to *works of the Law*, works which the Law requires to Juſtification (which none have, and if any be juſtified at all, it muſt be therefore *without them*, not in oppoſition to Repentance, and Evangelical Obedience: and though it be for *Chriſt*'s ſake, or *his* merits, and not

We are accounted righteous before God only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt by Faith, and not for our own works or deſervings: Wherefore that we are juſtified by Faith only, is a moſt wholſom Doctrine, and very full of comfort, as more largely is expreſſed in the Homily of Juſtification.

not *ours*, that he accounts us *righteous*, yet is our Faith, Repentance, and ſincere Obedience, the condition upon which he does it; or rather the Righteouſneſs it ſelf, which upon the account of Chriſt's deſerving, he accepts unto life everlaſting.

Art. 13. When *good works done before grace* are ſaid to have *the nature of ſin*, I underſtand that thô ſuch works are good *quoad operis ſubſtantiam*, yet they are evil *quoad modum quo ordinantur ad vitam æternam*, and conſequently when they are ſaid *not to be pleaſant unto God*, I underſtand, not acceptable unto Salvation. *I* judg that the doing what we can through the ſtrength of *free will*, and *common* grace, is not to be diſcouraged, and to be held in ſome good ſenſe preparatory to ſaving Converſion; yet becauſe there is no *full promiſe* made thereunto as the condition of obtaining that grace which is *ſpecial*, it is truly ſaid, that ſuch works do not *make us meet* for receiving, or do not *of congruity deſerve* the ſame.

Works done before the grace of Chriſt, and the inſpiration of his Spirit, are not pleaſant to God, foraſmuch as they ſpring not of Faith in Jeſus Chriſt, neither do they make men meet to receive grace, (or as the School-Authors ſay) deſerve grace of congruity: yea, rather for that they are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not but they have the nature of ſin.

Art.

Art. 16, 17. I apprehend the Church here does follow St. *Auſtin* in the Points of *Election* and *Perſeverance*; and when it is ſaid, that, *after we have received the Holy Ghoſt, we may depart from grace given*, it muſt be underſtood ſo, as that the Elect for all that, ſhall never *finally fall away*, but ſhall infallibly *recover*, and be ſaved.

Predeſtination to life is the everlaſting purpoſe of God, whereby (before the foundations of the world were laid) he hath conſtantly decreed by his Counſel, ſecret to us, to deliver from curſe and damnation thoſe whom he hath choſen in Chriſt out of mankind, and to bring them by Chriſt to everlaſting Salvation, as Veſſels made to honour. After we have received the Holy Ghoſt, we may depart from grace given, and fall into ſin; and by the grace of God (we may) ariſe again, and amend our lives.

Art. 18. I obſerve the Church hath but one *Anathema* in all her Articles, and that ſeems to be denounced here againſt all thoſe who do, or ſhall hold that any perſons can be ſaved that are not Chriſtians, as if the *Death of Chriſt*, or benefits thereof, and the *knowledge of him* were commenſurate through the world. But God forbid! I am out of doubt that God hath a Government over all mankind, which is Moral in order to Life and Salvation, and that the inſtrument

They are to be had accurſed, that preſume to ſay that every man ſhall be ſaved by the Law or Sect which he profeſſeth, ſo that he be diligent to frame his life according to that Law, and the light of nature. For holy Scripture doth ſet out unto us only the name of Jeſus Chriſt whereby men muſt be ſaved.

of that Government muſt be the Law of *Grace* (the Law of *Innocency* becoming in the ſtate of *Lapſed Nature*, uncapable of that end) which being at firſt promulgated to *Adam* after his Fall, and to *Noah*, muſt belong to all their Poſterity, inſomuch as every one (whoſoever he be) that lives up in ſincerity to this Law, according to that adminiſtration of it he is under, ſhall be ſaved. For my Aſſent then to this Article, I do deſire the word [*by*] may be eſpecially noted. I could not aſſent to this Article, if it were [*in the Law or Sect he profeſſeth,*] but being [*by,*] I hold plainly, that if a Heathen, or any Perſon that never heard the Goſpel, repents of his ſin, and truſts to a good God, and lives up to the *Law* (or Covenant) *of Grace according to the firſt Edition of it*, (I ſay, if any ſuch indeed do, *Rom.* 2. 26. *Act.* 10. 35.) and thereby comes to be ſaved, it is by the Chriſtian Religion which he *implicitely* holds in the ſubſtance with us, and not [*by the Law & Sect that he profeſſeth*] that he is ſaved. And this Salvation of his is in and through the Name and Mediation of Jeſus Chriſt, no leſs than ours is, who procured that Law for them and all the *World*, as well as for *Abraham* and the Jews under the *Old*, and for us under the *New Teſtament*.

Art.

Art. 20. The *Church* I think hath [*Power to Decree Rites or Ceremonies,*] that is, ſome Rites, not any whatſoever, provided ſhe uſes due caution, not placing matter of Worſhip or Neceſſity, much leſs Merit or Juſtification in them, nor ſcandalizing her Members thereby, and not impoſing them, when they need not, as conditions of her Communion: Yet if ſhe does ſo, and the *Impoſition* be unlawful, if thoſe Rites or Ceremonies be not ſinful in themſelves, we cannot (I apprehend) refuſe our *ſubmiſſion* for all that, ſo long as the *Supream Power* confirms the ſame. Again the Church *hath authority in controverſies of Faith,* not to make any *new Articles* thereof, for that were *Antichriſtian*: but upon mature debate to judge what points are *de fide* (or neceſſary according to the Scripture to be received) and what not: Only this authority when ſhe hath done, is Miniſterial, or *Declarative*, not *Conſtitutive* of duty, as *Chriſt's* the Lawgiver's is, and as *Princes*, or the Supream Magiſtrates in his Sphear is ſo alſo. *The Clergy in their Convocation is to order and ſettle them, having firſt obtained leave under our broad Seal ſo to do, and we approving their ſaid Ordinances*, ſays the King in his Declaration before theſe Articles.

The Church hath power to decree Rites or Ceremonies, and authority in controverſies of Faith.

Art. 34. I assent to this Article as parallel with the last mentioned, and I gain-say not, but the open breakers of the Churches *Traditions* or *Ceremonies* may be *reproved* for the sake of others: Yet in regard that some of these Traditions or Ceremonies may be *repugnant to the Word of God* in the judgment of *some* men, which are not to *others*, I apprehend both that the reasons of such ought to be heard, and that we cannot condemn any for acting so among others, as to have always a care never to do any thing against Conscience for Company.

Whosoever through his private judgment, willingly and purposely doth openly break the Traditions and Ceremonies of the Church, which be not repugnant to the Word of God, and be ordained and approved by common authority, ought to be rebuked openly, (that others may fear to do the like) as he that offendeth against the common order of the Church, and hurteth the authority of the Magistrate, and woundeth the consciences of the weak brethren.

Art. 35. I receive this *Article* on an *implicite* faith, and I desire that may serve, because I have not read over the *Homilies*, and cannot assent any otherwise therefore, till I have.

The second Book of Homilies, the several titles whereof we have joyned under this Article, doth contain a godly and wholsome Doctrine, and necessary for these times, as doth the former book of Homilies, which were set forth in the time of Edward *the sixth: and therefore we judge them to be read in Churches by the Ministers diligently, and distinctly, that they may be understanded of the people.*

Art. 36.

Art. 36. *I* underſtand by *Superſtition* and *Ungodlineſs*, two particular *Species* of that which is *ſinful*. *I* dare not ſay that there is nothing at all in the whole Book of Conſecration and Orders here mentioned, that is ſinful: The Article does not ſay ſo, but that there is not *any thing in it that of it ſelf is Superſtitious or Ungodly*, that is, ſinful upon the account of either of theſe particular ſpecies of ſin. And to this I think *I* may aſſent, at leaſt after *I* have added this caution, that theſe Articles were agreed upon in the year 1562. and new publiſhed by King *James*, and that this book therefore muſt be underſtood of the *old* book in his time, and not of the book as it is of *late altered* with the *new Preface* put to it, wherein there is one thing eſpecially (which I paſs here nameleſs) too too hard for my Approbation.

The book of Conſecration of Archbiſhops and Biſhops, and ordering of Prieſts and Deacons, lately ſet forth in the time of Edward *the ſixth, and confirmed at the ſame time by authority of* Parliament, *doth contain all things neceſſary to ſuch Conſecration and Ordering: neither hath it any thing that of it ſelf is ſuperſtitious and ungodly.*

Having thus given my *Explication*, with what I *premiſed* before it, it is fit I make yet ſome little farther *apology* for this liberty. There is a threefold *Interpretation* according to *Suarez* in his excellent Book *De Legibus*: An *Authentick*, *Uſual*, *and Doctoral* (I think he calls it *Doctrinal*) interpretation. I have explai-

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ned *two* of the terms in the beginning, and the *third* needs no explanation, and *I* need not *it*. These *Articles* of the *Church* I suppose to be subscribed generally with this presumption that we may use a *Doctoral* Interpretation; but the question indeed may be whether a man can strictly in point of Conscience give his assent, or subscribe to any *Article*, unless he believe it to be true in the *Authentick* sense, or meaning of the *Imposers*, *I* must confess *I* have had such an impression on my mind, that unless *I* believe an *Article* in that sense, which *I* take to be the sense of the *majority* of the *Convocation* that passed the *Articles*, I could not choose but scruple the declaring my assent to it for fear of a *Lye*; and yet do I find that an *Usher* and *Hammond*, the *Arminians* and *Calviniſts* do subscribe the same *Articles* without making any scruple about their diversity of interpretation. *I* find also that in the *Council* of *Trent* the Doctors differ'd in most points, yet as soon as they were but contrived into such words as might salve the contrary opinions, they passed them as unanimous in the *Council*, writing after one against another, and citing the *Council* for them on both sides. There is this difference therefore seems reasonable to be made between a *Law* and a *Doctrinal Theſis* for *eſtabliſhing conſent in the matter of Religion*; That when the *one* must be taken still in the

the *Authentick*, the *other* is to be conſtrued in a *Doctoral* interpretation. *I* have intimated it before, *I* muſt now give my reaſon, which is alſo ſaid, but not applied. *It* is becauſe the authority of a *Lawgiver* is *Magiſterial* or *Imperative*, that conſtitutes duty, and his will is uncontroulable: but the *Paſtors* authority, or Convent of *Biſhops* and *Preſbyters*, for agreement in points of Doctrine, is *Miniſterial* and *Declarative* only (*I* may uſe the ſame terms *I* hope *I* have before, and nauſeate no body) obliging not, *niſi ſententia non errante*, or no farther than they be agreeable to *Gods Word*; and while every one does judge of *that*, there muſt be a diverſity of interpretation, it being not equal that ſo many *Articles* ſhould be ſubſcribed by all, but upon that ſuppoſition. *I* never could be ſatisfied therefore with that *coming off* which is propoſed by ſome great and ingenious men (ſuch as *Chillingworth*) as ſufficient for ſubſcribing theſe Articles, that they underſtand nothing elſe by it, but an obligation not to preach or write againſt them. A gloſs both *too laxe*, becauſe they do not ſubſcribe, *I engage never to write or preach againſt the Articles*, but they profeſs their unfeigned *aſſent* to them, and if this be underſtood of the *Authentick* ſenſe, they cannot profeſs it: and *too ſtreight*, becauſe, when they preach upon any ſuch point, they will ſpeak (do

what

what they can) according to their own Opinion, and ſo break their Engagement. It were to be wiſhed therefore, that if ever we have a *Convocation* that Sits to do any thing, they would paſs ſome ſuch New *Canon* (moſt fit to be decreed) as may declare that the *Articles* and *Homilies* of the *Church* are not required to be ſubſcribed, but with this freedom of a *Doctoral interpretation*. Were ſuch a liberty authorized by an *Act* of *Parliament*, or *Convocation*, the conſcience were put out of doubt: In the mean while when others are ſatisfied with the reaſonableneſs of the thing, whether it be *authorized* or not, I finding my ſelf in doubt about it, am forced to this courſe, which is to ſecure my peace by my aforeſaid *Explication*, and my foreprized declaration concerning the matter.

I proceed now to the *Subſcription*, or *Declaration* required to be *ſubſcribed* by the *Act*.

Underſtanding by *taking Arms*, raiſing War, or joyning in it, and by the King, his Sacred Perſon and Authority, I ſubſcribe the firſt clauſe thereof, *That it is not lawful to take Arms againſt the King upon any pretence whatſoever.*

Underſtanding the word *abhor*, in a cool ſenſe [I diſclaim,] and by the *Commiſſionated* thoſe who *have*, and *purſue* their *Commiſſions* according to *Law*, I ſub-

I ſubſcribe the Second Clauſe of it; *And that I do abhor that Traiterous Poſition of taking Arms by his Authority* (or by Law, that is, upon *pretence* of it, for the Poſition elſe is impoſſible) *againſt his Perſon, or againſt thoſe that are Commiſſionated by him.*

The Third Clauſe *I* take to be an Indefinite Promiſe of uſing Common Prayer, which in the main *I* am not againſt: And I do therefore ſubſcribe, that if *I* have a Publick Charge or Cure of Souls, *I* ſhall in the *ordinary conſtant Lords Day Service*, ordinarily, by my ſelf, or by my Aſſiſtant, according to the uſage of the Church, *Rebus ſic ſtantibus*, Conform *to the Liturgy of the Church of* England *as it is now by Law eſtabliſhed.*

Whether this be the ſenſe of the Law-giver altogether, it may be a doubt: but in this ſenſe, ſuppoſing it to be ſo, or with theſe limitations thereunto, if it be otherwiſe, I ſet my name.

The Second Step,

BEING

A leſſer Requeſt, the former not obtained.

IT was the *policy* of the Contrivers of the *Act for Uniformity*, that thoſe *Miniſters* who were engaged in the late times on the *Parliament* ſide by *taking the Covenant*, ſhould renounce it, or be debarred the liberty of their Miniſtry for *twenty years*, accounting I ſuppoſe that if any ſurvived *that time*, there could be no danger in their *re-admiſſion*. There was a clauſe therefore in the *Subſcription* beſides thoſe before-going, which *concern'd the Covenant*, and was the ſoreſt part of this *injunction*, abiding in force till the *laſt year*, and then it *expired*. It was believed that many of the *Nonconformiſts* upon the expiration would have flocked in, and ſubſcribed, but *I* know not of *any who took the Covenant*, but my *ſelf* only *who took it not*, that have made any *tryal* upon that occaſion. Nevertheleſs to proceed in what I have begun, having wrote

Wrote this Paper, and preſented it to the Biſhop the laſt year (1682) when that clauſe ceaſed, I think good this year (1683) to Print it, upon the account enſuing.

I do apprehend there is a kind of univerſal guilt upon the *Conformiſt* (ſome few alwaies excepted) in receiving our late *Impoſitions* hand over head, as they did, which they ſhould rather have all refuſed as one man, and required explanation. How many were there prepared (the good God vouchſafe us all a ſight of our ſins, and forgive them) to declare their *aſſent* and *conſent* to *all* and *every* thing in a *book* before they ſaw it, at leaſt read it with any examination as they ſhould have done? How many more were there yet more forward to *ſubſcribe* a *Declaration*, wherein there were ſo many hard things to be ſwallowed, before any had wrote about them, or themſelves able to digeſt ſcarce any one branch of it? It was their intereſt to comply, but how they could *declare* and *ſubſcribe* ſo ſoon (or perhaps can yet) in *Truth*, *Judgment* and *Righteouſneſs*, the Lord knows.

On the other ſide, I am no leſs ſenſible of a great deal of *weakneſs* and *prejudice* among our brethren, in judging things *ſinful* that are *not*, and conſequently *Superſtition* in placing fear and danger in ſuch things. There is beſides, no little con-

ceitedneſs of ſome mens being *more holy* than the *Conformiſt*, and conſequently *Pride*, *Uncharitableneſs*, *Judging of others*; and if any Perſons ſhall *ſeparate* from the *publick* on ſinful grounds, it is really *Schiſm*, and in real Schiſm how many evils are there included?

In this caſe of *Sin* and *Scandal*, which we ſee on both ſides, I would fain know what way there is for any of us to eſcape, but by following the rule I have laid down.

On the point of *Sin*. If I *aſſent* to the *Articles*, and *ſubſcribe* the *Declaration* without an *Explication*, then do I aſſent to what I think *true*, and what I think *not true* in thoſe Articles, and I *ſubſcribe* that which *I* take to be the *good ſenſe*, and that which is alſo the *bad ſenſe* of the Declaration, which ſeems *unlawful* to be done, as what neither becomes a *good Chriſtian*, or *true Engliſh-man*: But if I aſſent and ſubſcribe with an *Explication*, then do I *aſſent* only to what I judg *true* in thoſe *Articles*, and I *ſubſcribe* only the *good ſenſe* of the *Declaration*, which ſeems not only what is *lawful*, but *fit* to be done, both as a *Chriſtian*, and *good Subject*, who is to be Loyal to the Government of the Nation.

On the point of *Scandal*. If I ſhall aſſent and ſubſcribe as others, without any Caution, Limitation, or Explication, then ſhall *I* (*quantum ad me*) harden

harden the *Conformiſt* (who hath Conformed blindly) in his ſin and impenitence, and draw the *Nonconformiſt* (who judgeth it unlawful) to do that which is againſt his Conſcience by my Example. If I do nothing, or *not* endeavour what *I can*, I nurſe up my *Brethren* in thoſe Evils before-mentioned, and give occaſion to the *Conformiſt* to ſay, Theſe men can do thus and thus, more than they do; and ſeeing they are ſuch peeviſh, obſtinate perſons, we do well to ſubmit to all that is Enjoyned our ſelves, and perſecute them, and ſo do I become a *ſtumbling-block* to the *one*, and to the *other*: But if I *aſſent* and *ſubſcribe* with *Explication*, (that is, do as *much*, and *only* what *I can*) then do I *deliver my own Soul*, neither partaking with my *Brethren* in theſe Evils out of which I ſtrive to bring them by my Example, nor give occaſion to the *Conformiſt* of any hardning, who ſeeing in me a regard to Authority, together with a care of my Conſcience in my *Explications*, he may come to be *judged in his own Thoughts*; and being ready perhaps then to hearken to any ingenuous Admonition, ſo long as it is tendred in ſuch a way as is not affected, or done with preference of my Underſtanding or Piety above his, but with Humility, and ſenſe of my own failings, at leaſt in many other things wherein he ſo much excels me, he may be brought (the

good

good Spirit of God graciously assisting) to that *Repentance* which is meet *towards God*, and that *Reconciliation towards us*, which we seek with him.

And now if my *Diocesan*, or *Metropolitan* (which I would chuse rather) or any other *Bishop* (they refusing) will vouchsafe me only this condescension in subscribing the Declaration, to speak to their *Register*, that in setting my name to his Book, *I* may have leave to do it in these words, *According to a Paper delivered in by me to the Bishop I subscribe*, *I* see no reason but *I* may put my name to his *Book*, as well as to this *Paper*; and any other may do so too, giving in the same, or so much of it (for all our *Nonconformists* have not their Exceptions alike) as himself needs.

I would urge the Argument of *Naamans* Servants. If the *Nonconformists* required *some great thing* of the *Bishops*, for us to come in and unite with them (especially under our common danger) *would not* they *do it?* and will they refuse us so small a matter? If none of them for all that will be got to grant us this, then must I commit the Cause of the *Nonconformists* to Almighty *God*, to be *Judg* therein between *them* and *us* in this matter.

THE

The Appendix,

BEING

My Judgment about coming to Church, and the Case of Private Meetings.

BEfore *I* leave my Province, *I* think fit to reflect a little on what *I* have ſaid, in reference to my Brethren of the Nonconforming Party, who will be apt, many of them, to be offended at me, that *I*, who am one of them, ſhould be ſo indifferent to either ſide, as I appear, which if it be a fault, I confeſs it; I am guilty of that impartiality or writing without reſpect of perſons, which I cannot help; and if that fault will make the *Epiſcopal* Party bear with me more equally than my *Brethren*, I think they deſerve to be blamed.

Indeed I hope that as for the moſt part of the Diſſenters, it is out of the *true Fear of God* that they chuſe the way wherein they go; but though I think that Fear of God to be *true*, I think it not *pure* and *unmixt* without *Errour*, and without *Imperfection*.

fection. They think (I will ſuppoſe, for I mean not as to all of them) the going to *Church* unlawful, and therefore ſet up *Meetings*: As they do this then, becauſe they are afraid to ſin, it is the Fear of God; but as there is Errour in this Fear, doubting of that to be ſin which is none, this Fear turns to Superſtition, and Superſtition can be no good ground for any thing a man does. The evil they fear being no evil, the cauſe for what they do is *no cauſe*, and to ſeparate from the *Church without a cauſe*, I hold to be *Schiſm.*

For my own part I am perſuaded in my Conſcience that it is lawful to go to a *Meeting*, and lawful to go to *Church*, and I am ſorry we have ſuch a company of ſuperſtitious folks of both ſides; Men and Women of the *Conformiſts* that think it a ſin to go to a *Meeting*, and of the *Nonconformiſt* that thinks he ſins if he go to *Church*, when there is no Communion of Chriſtians whatſoever, where the Eſſentials of Chriſtianity are, but to ſeparate from them without a cauſe, whether on one ſide or other, is Schiſm. I ſay not that every *Conformiſt* therefore that goes to *Church*, and never to a *Meeting*, does incur this guilt, becauſe, though he be *locally* never at a *Meeting*, yet does he not *mentally* ſeparate from the *Meeters*, who holds them for all that to be true Chriſtians, and counts it no ſin to joyn with them in Com-

Communion, if he had reaſon: Only he is himſelf well ſatisfied with the Service of the *Church*, and he hath no reaſon for his going otherwhere. It is not ſo on the part of the *Nonconformiſt*; there is a Command of the Magiſtrate, that he ſhall come to Church, & if he does not, he muſt have ſome more prevailing reaſon or cauſe that will juſtifie his refuſing it, or elſe his Separation being *cauſleſs* (I muſt ſtill ſay) cannot but be ſin, and conſequently Schiſm. If this pleaſe ſome, it may be I ſhall diſpleaſe them in what I ſay next; and if it diſpleaſe ſome, I may next pleaſe them; but I ſpeak my Conſcience. A Perſon is ſet apart for the Office of the Miniſtry; he being not able to conform, is prohibited to Preach in Publick; having a Call in Private, he Preaches in a *Meeting*; what is there in this, which the Apoſtles own caſe does not juſtifie? *Whether it be meet to obey God or man, judge ye.* I think moreover, that the Commiſſion of Chriſt which warrants a *Miniſters* Preaching, does alſo warrant the *Hearers*; becauſe *Preaching* and *Hearing* are *Relata*, which will mutually draw one another. *I* muſt add, if ſome good men farther, out of a ſenſe of wrong to the Ejected, do think themſelves bound to come ſometimes and hear ſuch Miniſters for acknowledging their Miniſtry, and delivering their Souls from participation of the guilt of thoſe that

Ejected them (especially if they were heretofore their own Pastors) *I* take this to be so much more Christian, and justifiable before God. But if these *Ministers* and *People* do judg the Parish-Church no *true Church*, or that it is a *sin* to go thither (not having any Exception which is *particular*, but what reaches all *Parochial Congregations*) and upon that ground set up their *Meetings*, *I* do not see (this ground of theirs being a mistaken ground, or this cause for their *Separation* being such as will not hold, and consequently *no cause*) how they can be justified from the aforesaid *Imputation*.

For the *Minister* to Preach (*I* must inculcate) upon the account of *Christs Commission*, preferring his *Masters* Authority before *Mans*, that is, upon the plea of *greater duty*, and for the *People* to come to hear by virtue of the same *Commission*, upon the same plea still of *farther* (or greater) *Edification* (as men go ordinarily to hear other Ministers than their own) not in a way of *Separation* from the Publick Ministers or Parish-Churches, but in *Conjunction* with them (speaking still so far as concerns God's word) I do maintain lawful: But if any of my Brethren do offer another Plea that must draw with it a separation from the Parish Church, whether it be that of holding such Churches to be no *true Churches*, or that the *Church* does impose such things

things as conditions of her *Ordinary, Conſtant Lay-communion* which are *ſinful* or intolerable, As I am of Opinion, that they can make no ſuch plea good; ſo muſt I heartily adviſe them to take heed, becauſe if they do ſtand upon ſuch a one, their Separation being without cauſe, if the Pariſh-Churches be true Churches, and it be no ſin to go to them, they know the Charge lyes againſt them. I will add, To ſeparate from any Church, upon a reaſon common to others, as becauſe we have a *Liturgy*, or the like, is virtually to ſeparate from all that have one, and conſequently from the moſt of Churches in all Ages of the World.

The truth is, there is ſuch an impreſſion got on the imaginations of ſome of the *Diſſenters*, that if they ſhould come in to the Church ſo as to be ſubject to the *Hierarchy*, and ſubmit to her preſent *Impoſitions*; nay, if they ſhall but touch with the *Conformiſt* almoſt in any thing, though only to *go to Church* with them, and take the *Sacrament* there (which yet as to Lay-conformity is in effect indeed all) they are afraid, as if it were the receiving upon them the *Mark of the Beaſt* (I mean, the doing ſome very horrid thing they know not well elſe what) and were therefore to be caſt remedileſs into the *Lake of Fire*. A buſineſs really of very ſad conſequence to our ſelves at home, as exceeding ſcanda-

lous to the *Reformed Churches* abroad, who have their *Liturgies* and *Ceremonies* as we have, and perhaps some or other of them less innocent than this of the *Church of England*.

But I will ask here, What think we of *Bradford*, *Philpot*, *Latimer*, *Ridley*, *Cranmer*, and the rest that suffered in Q. *Mary*'s time? Were there not amongst these holy Martyrs an *Archbishop* and *Bishops*, and did not they go ordinarily to *Church*, and receive the Sacrament according to the *Liturgy* as we do, and admit of all the Impositions besides in King *Edward*'s days? Nay, what think we of the old *Nonconformists* in Q. *Elizabeth*'s and K. *James* his time, who, though they laid down their Ministry rather than to conform to some Impositions afterwards, did yet maintain Communion with the Parish-Churches all their days? Did any of these now, or all these receive the *Mark in their right hands*, or in their *foreheads* by this means? And must they therefore be everlastingly damned?

I argue: The receiving the Mark in the *Revelations* must be a sin certainly, because the receiver is cast into Hell for it. But to obey the Law, or to conform only so far as we can (which is the Rule of these Papers) is the duty of every man, & no sin.

Again; if receiving these Impositions be receiving the Mark, it must be the promiscuous receiving

ving them, without caution, (which to beware of is the end of theſe Papers) or againſt Conſcience, that is, ſinfully receiving them: But to receive them (as I here propoſe) with *Explication* (which is to receive them no otherwiſe but ſo as they may and ought to be received) is to get a *victory over the Mark*, avoiding the ſin in the doing.

I muſt confeſs I am ſorry that I have need to ſay thus much, I wiſh I had not; but there are ſome odd minds, ſome vehement Revelation-men, ſome melancholy Spirits, and I am much aſſured that ſuch a conception I ſpeak of is not uncommon to ſuch. As for thoſe that never had any ſuch kind of thought, but have their rational Exceptions, it will yet be well even for them, when they ſhall be able to get off their proper Objections, ſo as to come honeſtly to Church, with a Judgment that is ſatisfied, and not only to avoid the Law, to be ſecured from this alſo after they have done; who can tell what impreſſion the ſuggeſtions of a mans own heart, if troubled, or the words of another upon occaſion may lay upon him? And as for ſuch as are for diſputing the Point, if they can produce thoſe Arguments as will prove that the *Church* hath indeed impoſed any thing as the condition of her *Ordinary* Communion, which is ſinful and intolerable, & thoſe Arguments be found, then muſt I acknowledge

ledge the Schiſm which is made by their Separation from her Communion through thoſe ſinful Impoſitions, muſt be imputed to her, & the *Church of England* is the *Schiſmatick* till ſhe removes them: But if thoſe Arguments be not ſufficient or unſound, then muſt the Schiſm which is made, be imputed to them. For if the cauſe upon which they ſeparate be found no cauſe (and an inſufficient one is none) *I* muſt aſſert ſtill, that the Separation here conceived being *cauſleſs*, muſt be Schiſm.

But what if it *be* Schiſm? There are many ſuch Miniſters, and ſuch People, who are rivetted in the belief, that the Pariſh-Churches are no true Churches, or at leaſt, that it is ſin to go thither, and what ſhall theſe do? I anſwer, I need not ſtand to ſay firſt what all will, that theſe men are to lay down their Errour, and ſo come to Church, as the only way to eſcape ſin; but ſeeing they can never be convinced of that, I muſt ſay, there are degrees of Sin and Schiſm, and the greateſt evil muſt be moſt carefully ſhun'd. To ſet up Meetings upon the account theſe do, is ſin, is Schiſm, I take it: but to hold no Meetings at all, and leave off the Aſſembling themſelves together, ſo as to rob God of his Worſhip altogether, this is certainly more ſinful, more wicked, more intolerable. It appears conſequently in the iſſue, that a Toleration (underſtand

ſtand ſuch a one as is meet, or of ſuch as are Tolerable) is even almoſt as neceſſary to be granted by His Majeſty and a Parliament, when we have one, as a conſtant and continued Pardon from God Almighty is to this poor divided Nation.

Not that I deny but there may be *Reaſons* for the Meetings of *Diſſenters* (and perhaps very *many*) that will hold, and cannot be gainſaid; and when *I* ſay that ſeparating from the Church upon ſuch grounds as draw ill conſequences after it, and will not hold, is *Schiſm*, I do not ſay that every meer local Separation from the Pariſh-Meeting when there is cauſe, is *ſo*, who am ſenſible what a *Scare-crow* hath been made of that bare word only, as Mr. *Hales* hath obſerved. Suppoſe a man ſtands upon his liberty from *God* and *Nature*, to chuſe his own *Paſtor* for the benefit of his Soul, as his own *Phyſician* for the health of his Body, and ſo uſing thoſe means which he finds moſt conducive to his own edification, he ſits down with ſuch or ſuch a *Meeting* for his *ſtated* Communion, when yet he refuſes not to go to *Church*, maintaining *occaſional* Communion alſo with his *Pariſh*, *I* will not deny but ſuch a man hath reaſon. Indeed, if he quite leave the *church*, I ſhall ſuſpect, according to my Principles, that his ground is not good, and that is all one as that he hath *none*.

You will ſay, if I go to *Church*, I muſt own the *Pariſh*, and I muſt own the *Dioceſs*, and I muſt own the

the *Bishop*, and his *Government*. I answer, and so you may; but it is not necessary that you own them as of *Divine Right*, which others I suppose do. Upon that *Hypothesis* I must confess I do not see how any Separation from the *Church* (unless in case of something imposed that is *sinful*) could be justifiable, and the *Conformists* therefore taking up that Principle, do generally condemn *all Meetings*, accusing them without discrimination of *Schism*: But it is *one* thing to own the Parish-Church, the Diocess, the Bishop, & Episcopal Government *according to Law*, and *another* to own them as of *Divine Institution*.

I apprehend that *Particular Congregations*, where there is a *Pastor* and *Flock* conjoyned for the Worship of God, & carrying on an holy life, are the Churches of *Christs appointment*, and that every Minister of such a particular People hath a power of *Governing* them, as well as *Teaching* them, derived to him from *Christ*, being *Episcopus Gregis*, by virtue of his *Office*, & if any then shall go to set up an *Episcopus Pastorum*, a Bishop of the Diocess to divest him that is Pastor of a particular Congregation (or the Minister of the Parish) of that Authority which Christ hath committed to him for governing his Flock (which he that makes a *Diocess* to be the only Church of *Apostolical* Institution, and the *Diocesan* the *sole Pastor*, must do) let him consider what he undertakes, seeing the burden which is hereby laid on the *Bishop*,

and

and the account he must make at the great day for the Souls of so many he takes no particular care at all of, is intolerable.

I will own the *Bishop* and his *Regiment*, but not to the denial of the *Ministers*. I will own a *Diocess*, but not to the unchurching *Particular Congregations*. There is another consideration therefore to be had of the *Church* than this here understood, and that is, as it is *National*, and the King the Head of it. The Church as *National* is divided into two *Provinces*, and these into twenty six *Dioceſſes*, and they into so many thousand *Parishes*. The Parish-Church consists of a Particular Congregation, which is therefore a Church of *Christs appointment*, and the Authority or Regiment the Minister, Pastor, or Bishop of such a Flock hath, is derived from *Christ*. The Authority the *Diocesan* hath is derived from the *King*. The King makes the Bishops (he might make them if he pleased, as *Henry* the Eighth by *Commission*) and he is the Fountain of their Honour, for they have *Baronies*, and upon that account sit in the *Lords House*; and if we may look on them accordingly as his *Officers*, to exercise no other Authority as *Diocesans*, but what they derive from him, then, As the Regiment of the *Bishop*, and of the *Pastors* are of a different kind, (the Power or Regiment of the *Pastor* being *internal*, or *in sacris*, and *formally* Ecclesiastical, flowing immediately from *Christ*, but the Regiment

of the *Bishop external*, or *circa sacra*, that is, *objectively* Ecclesiastical, deriving from the *King*,) so must the Authority or Government of the *one* be *cumulative* to, and not *destructive* of the *other*.

And this is a Notion, which methinks should not be hard of entrance to the *Conformist* or *Nonconformist*. On the one side the *Bishop* should receive it, because it grants him his Honour, Dignity, and great Revenues upon a clear and open foundation, and it lightens his care and work. The Office of a *Bishop* upon this *Hypothesis* may be discharged as that of any other *Magistrate* under the King: But the Office of the *Diocesan* upon the other *Hypothesis* is a charge he can never perform, and if he live in the negligence of what he thinks his duty, and that wilfully, all his life, how can he be saved? On the other side, the *Nonconformist* should receive it, because it opens his Eyes, & lets him see how he may be subject to the Bishop, as he is to the *King* and the other *Magistrates* under him, without molestation to his Conscience. And this should be the Stone which I would lay for the Foundation (if ever a Parliament would build upon it) of a sound and lasting Peace in the Nation. Whither this tends, let the Reader see farther in the twelfth Section of that universally Learned sort of Gentlemans late Book call'd *The Samaritan*.

FINIS.

An Advertiſement from the Bookſeller.

THere is a late new Book, Intituled, *A Private Pſalter*, compoſed by the ſame *Hand* that wrote theſe ſheets, which being a *Devotional* Book, is put in a fair Character for the ſake of aged Eyes, and ſold by me, whom the Reader may find out by the Title page.

Thomas Parkhurſt.

An Addition from the Author.

UPon the mention of this Book I have theſe few words to ſubjoyn concerning the ſame: If I can judg any thing in Divinity, there is hardly any matter of more near importance to the moſt of ſerious Chriſtians than this one thing, to wit, to be ſolidly informed what to do, or how to live, and ſupport the Soul under the caſe when it hath examined itſelf, and is in conflict and doubt whether it be in a ſtate *of* Gods favour, *which is all one as whether it be* ſincere *or not. They that are light Chriſtians, do often talk of their aſſurance, when the more weighty Chriſtians are ready to droop and hang the head, as the ears of Corn do that are fulleſt.*

In the laſt Section of the evening Office of that Private Pſalter, *there is a Determination* de induſtria *of this caſe, according as I was able to admit Inſtruction with Devotion into my Deſign. I am ſenſible of the* ſmallneſs *of my* Talent, *and the* greatneſs *of the* Concern, *and that whatſoever is* peculiar, *is in danger to be* defective, *who muſt confeſs my* genius *hath led me to the ſeeking a* middle *reſolution in this great* Practical *caſe, in regard to* Life *and* Comfort, *as it hath uſually done in the matter of polemical* Opinions. *And for the ſake of this caſe more eſpecially was that Book printed.*

If any worthy Perſon therefore of the Conforming *Miniſtry, who hath a Pen accompliſhed with the ſtile of the Times* (*whoſe fluency, or command of words may make the task eaſy to him, which would be* burdenſome *to me*) *will take the ſenſe only, or matter of that laſt Section, I mean the full and whole ſenſe of it, though nothing elſe purely but what is there hinted, and enlarge it into a Treatiſe of a convenient dimenſion, as he ſhall pitch upon a ſubject to exerciſe his parts, which I think like to be profitable to moſt Chriſtians, eſpecially to ſuch as are of a tender Spirit, and ſolicitous about their Spiritual eſtate, ſo if he will bring it to the Bookſeller, above intimated, to put it into the Preſs, he will not be ungrateful to him, I ſuppoſe, for his Copy.*

John Humfrey.